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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, October 28

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

October 29, 2009

09:33 Met "Ship for Southeast Asian Youth" project participants and others at the Kantei.

12:23 Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano.

13:02 Attended a Lower House plenary session.

16:29 Met Defense Minister Kitazawa and MSDF Chief of Staff Akahoshi.

17:03 Met Senior Vice-Foreign Minister Fukuyama and Global Issues Director-General Sugiyama at the Kantei.

18:12 Met Fukuyama and Deputy Foreign Minister Sasae.

19:49 Arrived at his official residential quarters.

4) Main questions and answers on foreign and security policies in Diet interpellations - LDP's Tanigaki grills PM over discrepancies in statements on Futenma, while Hatoyama declares he will make final decision

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
October 29, 2009

Sadakazu Tanigaki, president, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP): Defense Minister Kitazawa indicated yesterday that he would accept the existing Futenma relocation plan and also expressed a plan to shift Maritime Self-Defense Force ships, now engaged in the refueling mission, to antiterrorism operations (off Somalia). Since

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the launch of the new administration, there have been discrepancies in remarks among Prime Minister Hatoyama, Foreign Minister Okada, Defense Minister Kitazawa, and others. I deeply fear that this hampers diplomacy.

The Democratic Party of Japan has indicated that it will look in the direction of reviewing the Futenma relocation issue and the modalities of U.S. forces in Japan. If the DPJ unilaterally reviews what was agreed upon between Japan and the United States without presenting a clear alternative plan, the bilateral alliance might be weakened.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, LDP: The refueling mission in the Indian Ocean is a significant operation that leads to the defense of Japan's sea lanes. Are you going to halt this and send private citizens to a place where the security situation is very bad? The cabinet also includes the head of the Social Democratic Party, which in its 2006 party convention adopted a statement saying "the Self-Defense Forces are clearly in a state of unconstitutionality." Does minister Fukushima regard the SDF as unconstitutional?

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama: Needless to say, the Japan-U.S. alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy. We will earnestly address the question of realigning U.S. forces in Japan after carefully examining, from the past viewpoint of security, the process that led to the Japan-U.S. agreement, while seriously taking the feelings of Okinawa's people into consideration. The previous (LDP-led) administration took more than 10 years to realize a conclusion on the Futenma issue. Who should be held responsible for that? I will make the final decision. We will not simply extend the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. We are earnestly and carefully studying the modalities of Japan's assistance that can truly be appreciated by the international community including Afghanistan.

My understanding is that support for Afghanistan is a matter that must be addressed by the international community as a whole. What is Japan really required to do? We want to provide aid proactively in Japan's realms of expertise after looking into the modalities of aid needed by the Afghan people. For instance, we are considering providing support in agriculture, vocational training to former soldiers, and enhancing police activities.

State Minister for Declining Birthrate Mizuho Fukushima (SDP): The SDP criticized the fact that under the LDP administration the SDF conducted overseas missions beyond the minimum necessary level of self-defense. I believe that under the Hatoyama administration the SDF will carry out activities within the framework of the Constitution.

5) Lower House interpellation and replies

NIKKEI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
October 29, 2009

Diplomacy and security

Nishimura: Do you intend to dispatch civilians to a nation with poor security (like Afghanistan) instead of extending the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean?

Prime minister: I would like to proactively support Afghanistan in

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areas of Japanese expertise. For instance, I am eager to provide agricultural assistance and vocational training to former soldiers. I would also like to strengthen the nation's police functions.

Nishimura: What are your views on the issue of seeking the return of all four islands in the Northern Territories as a package and on the Takeshima islets issue?

Prime minister: Trust between the leaders (of Japan and Russia) is important in settling the Northern Territories issue. While deepening dialogue between the two countries' leaders, I would like to solve the issue of the return of the Northern Territories, and then conclude a peace treaty. Our nation's stance on the sovereignty of the Takeshima islets is consistent. Nothing has changed.

Nishimura: What are your policies on the North Korean abduction and nuclear and missile development issues?

Prime minister: I would like to endeavor to normalize ties between the two countries, by settling various pending issues, including the abduction and nuclear and missile development issues, in a comprehensive manner. I absolutely cannot accept North Korea's nuclear and missile development. Japan must work together with the U.S. and South Korea on these issues.

6) Dissolving Lower House is one option for taking responsibility, says prime minister

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

Replying to a question asked during an interpellation on Oct. 28, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama Oct. 28 said that he would take responsibility in the event that his cabinet failed to realize pledges included in the Democratic Party of Japan's manifesto for the August Lower House election. In this connection, he told the press corps that dissolving the Lower House would be one way to take responsibility. He said: "There are various ways of taking political responsibility. The most visible and honest way is to seek the people's mandate through an election." He also noted, "I do not think I have broken campaign pledges."

7) LDP, other opposition parties submit cargo inspection bill at Lower House

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
October 29, 2009

Yesterday the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Japan Renaissance Party, Your Party, and the group to protect national interests and the livelihoods of the people (Hiranuma group) jointly submitted a bill to facilitate cargo inspections of ships heading to and from North Korea to the House of Representatives. The New Komeito party, however, did not respond to the LDP's call for jointly presenting the bill, citing that it will make a decision after examining the contents of the government-drafted bill.

8) USFJ chief: Kadena plan fails to meet operational benchmark

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
October 29, 2009

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Yoichi Kato, senior writer

The U.S. government cannot not accept Foreign Minister Okada's advocacy of integrating the heliport functions of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, into the U.S. Kadena Air Base in the prefecture, U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) Commander Rice, a U.S. Air Force lieutenant general, told the Asahi Shimbun in an interview yesterday at USFJ headquarters located on the Yokota base. "It does not satisfy our required standards for operation," the USFJ chief said.

"Secretary of Defense Gates made clear this point in a press conference," Rice said, stressing that the U.S. government has already made a decision on the matter.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates recently visited Japan and he met with Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa on Oct. 21. In the joint press conference that followed, Gates said: "The U.S. government has looked closely into every alternative plan. We believe that all of these plans are politically unsustainable and operationally unfeasible."

In this regard, Foreign Minister Okada has suggested the need for the Japanese government to thrash out the operational issues that the Pentagon chief pointed out. "We're still in the process of verifying his account and we also want to hear their views," Okada told a press conference yesterday, adding: "They say Kadena is inconceivable (as an alternative to take over Futenma airfield's functions). There's no doubt that the local opposition is one of the major reasons for saying that. But when it comes to the rest of his account, I do not necessarily agree with him."

In the interview, Rice avoided referring to the "operational issues" in detail while taking the position that an open explanation would complicate the talks. However, he clarified that the U.S. government is ready to cooperate further. "The U.S. government will do its best to provide accurate information so that the Japanese government can promptly reach a conclusion that will benefit our alliance," he said.

9) Futenma Air Station relocation issue: Some differences in statements by cabinet ministers do not mean that they are in disagreement -- Hirano gives government's view

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

"One can say that the cabinet is in discord if a minister makes a statement contrary to the policy stance adopted at a cabinet meeting. I believe that even if there are differences in statements made by various cabinet ministers on an issue, it is not the case that one can say there is discord in the cabinet."

Referring to the fact that different views on the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station relocation issue have surfaced among cabinet ministers, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano revealed such a government view at a press briefing on the afternoon of Oct. 28

As an opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) criticized the cabinet as being in discord when former Prime Minister Aso or cabinet ministers showed signs of disagreement on

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various issues, even if they were not directly related to cabinet decisions.

The new view given by Hirano is apparently in disagreement with the stance the DPJ took when it was an opposition party.

Prime Minister Hatoyama told reporters, "It is all right for cabinet ministers to state their views in displaying political leadership." He then added, "If I make a final decision, I would like them to act in accordance with it."

10) Sense of urgency in cabinet over Futenma issue two weeks ahead of President Obama's visit

With U.S. President Barack Obama coming to Japan in about two weeks, the Yukio Hatoyama cabinet is unable to agree on the question of the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station. Discontent has surfaced among the local governments in Okinawa. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada hopes to visit the U.S. again shortly before the President's visit for discussions with the U.S. side on breaking the impasse, but prospects remain uncertain. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has stated repeatedly that "I will be the one to make the final decision," but he has very little time left.

Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima and other local government leaders met Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) in the early evening on Oct. 28. "We have heard various opinions coming out from the cabinet. We would like you to deal with this matter carefully, keeping in mind the danger posed by Futenma," Nakaima complained.

Okada has been talking about a plan to integrate the Futenma base with Kadena Air Base without prior consultations with the local leaders, while Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa has said "even the current plan does not contradict the campaign pledge of the Democratic Party of Japan." The governor's complaint conveyed the sentiments in Okinawa. Yet, Hatoyama on Oct. 28 still said, "Since we operate under a system of politician-led decision-making, it is okay for the cabinet ministers to voice their opinions," indicating his tolerance for the ministers' (conflicting) remarks.

Although the Hatoyama cabinet claims that President Obama's visit on Nov. 12 does not constitute a deadline for reaching a conclusion, there is a growing sense of urgency behind the scenes. Okada, who believes that "there is room for negotiation" on the Kadena integration plan, plans to visit the U.S. around Nov. 6 for discussions with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. However, this schedule has not been confirmed. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs source explains, "We are unable to make official inquiries because the schedule of the extraordinary Diet session has not been finalized." In addition, Clinton's schedule is rather tight because she will depart on an overseas trip on Nov. 7.

Okada plans to meet U.S. Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Edward Rice, Department of Defense Country Director for Japan Suzanne Basalla, and other officials to listen to the U.S. side's thinking directly. However, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has rejected the Kadena integration plan, and a senior Defense official has indicated that minor modifications to the existing plan would be

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acceptable. It appears that there is also a wide gap between the Hatoyama cabinet and the Obama administration with regard to whether there is room for negotiation on the Kadena integration idea.

11) MSDF missile test successful

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

The Myoko, an Aegis-equipped destroyer of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, succeeded in shooting down a mock-up target in its test launch off Hawaii of the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3), a sea-based missile defense system. The SM-3 test was conducted in waters off Hawaii on Oct. 27, at 6 p.m. (Oct. 28, 1 p.m., Japan time). This is a third test launch of the SM-3. The first test, conducted in 2007, was successful, but last year's second test failed. This time around, the U.S. military launched a ballistic missile from a missile launch test site. The Myoko, standing by at sea several hundred kilometers away, launched an SM-3 interceptor about four minutes after detecting the target.

12) SDP leader opposes proposal for MSDF to refuel warships in antipiracy operations off Somalia

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said (on Oct. 27) that he was considering a plan to have the Maritime Self-Defense Force warships now engaged in a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean join international antipiracy operations off Somalia, Africa. In response to this proposal, Social Democratic Party President Mizuho Fukushima expressed her opposition in a press conference yesterday: "That is a totally unexpected and irrational idea. In principle Self-Defense Force troops should not be dispatched overseas."

Fukushima also expressed opposition to a proposal to integrate the functions of the U.S. Marine Corp's Air Station in Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture, into Kadena Air Base, saying, "I wonder if this plan would contribute to reducing the burden on the people in Okinawa." Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada has said that he is considering the integration plan.

13) Hatoyama orders defense minister to take Japan-South Korea relations into consideration in dealing with MSDF ship collision

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa in the Diet Building yesterday and received from him a report on the collision between the Maritime Self-Defense Force's destroyer and a South Korean-registered container ship. Focusing on the fact that the South Korean cargo ship had changed its course in response to instructions by the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), the prime minister instructed the defense minister to deal with the case in a cautious manner. Hatoyama said: "It is necessary to carefully deal with the case so as not to damage Japan-South Korea relations."

The container ship was attempting to overtake a cargo ship. The JCG revealed yesterday that a controller at the maritime traffic center overseeing the Kanmon Strait had given the container ship

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instructions for overtaking the other vessel, but these instructions brought the ship close to the course of the approaching destroyer just prior to the collision.

14) Possible return of additional 4.3 hectares of land at Camp Zama to Japan

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 29, 2009

Japan and the U.S. are considering a new plan in which the U.S. would return approximately 4.3 hectares of land at Camp Zama (a total of about 235 hectares, in the cities of Zama and Sagamihara) in Kanagawa Prefecture to Japan as part of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, it was learned yesterday. The South Kanto Defense Bureau conveyed the new plan to the Zama municipal government yesterday.

Japan and the U.S. agreed in deputy director general-level talks of their foreign and defense officials in 2006 on the U.S.'s return of 1.1 hectares of land in Zama City on the site of Camp Zama to Japan.

15) Foreign Minister Okada considering U.S. visit

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
October 29, 2009

It was learned yesterday that Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada is considering a trip to Washington before U.S. President Barack Obama visits Japan on Nov. 12-13. He hopes to hold talks with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. However, many in political circles take the view that it will be difficult to realize Okada's plan because he is required to attend budget committee sessions of the two Diet chambers that will take place in early November and because Clinton will be busy.

